

Application No. 09/543,764
Inventor: John L. Howes

Art Unit 2165

Examiner: James H. Zurita
Filed: 5 April 2000

AMENDMENT A - CLEAN VERSION

1. A business method for the direct supply for containerized liquid coating product inclusive of a plurality of particular, custom, colors by a supplier remote from a consumer, said business method comprising the steps of:

placing by at least one consumer of a customer order directly with a remote supplier specifying customer order information including indication of at least one liquid coating base, a color, a quantity, delivery address and identification of the customer;

entering said customer order information into a customer order subsystem comprised of software maintained on a computer;

compiling said customer order information with a computer and processing the results of this compilation with a production subsystem to yield production parameters;

operating, in observance of said production parameters yielded by said production subsystem, a containerized liquid coating production line capable of producing a plurality of particular, custom, color containerized liquid coatings with a precision in the addition of colorant to liquid coating base exceeding the precision readily obtainable by a conventional local retailer;

assembling containerized liquid coating product resulting from said production line fulfilling at least one individual customer order and packaging the resulting assemblage as required for shipment;

transporting each said assemblage of containerized liquid coating product fulfilling each said customer order to the delivery address specified by the consumer in placing the customer order;

whereby each said consumer obtains delivery of containerized liquid coating product directly to a specified address which may be inclusive of particular, custom, colors.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein said containerized liquid coating product is containerized in rigid metal containers of one gallon capacity.

continued

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3. The method of claim 2 wherein fulfillment of said customer order includes partial filling of one of said rigid metal containers of one gallon capacity.

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4. The method of claim 1 wherein said containerized liquid coating product is containerized in molded plastic expandible containers.

6. The method of claim 4 wherein said molded plastic expandible containers possess a collar about an aperture which collar is gripped during operation of said production line.

7. The method of claim 1 further including the step of identifying customer order information upon containers holding containerized liquid coating product.

8. The method of claim 7 wherein the step of identifying customer order information upon said containers is effected with the attachment of a label to each said container bearing a digital code readable by a scanner.

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9. The method of claim 7 wherein the step of identifying customer order information upon said containers is effected with the attachment of a label to each said container bearing printed customer order information.

10. The method of claim 7 wherein said customer order information is comprised of at least one of the group comprised of: color name of liquid coating product, customer name, delivery date, quantity of product in order, number of containers for each liquid coating product in the order.

11. The method of claim 1 wherein the operation of said production line includes the addition of blended liquid coating base to an empty container.

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12. The method of claim 11 wherein said blended liquid coating base is obtained from a manufacturer in large containers ranging in volume from fifty-five gallon barrels through railroad tank cars inclusive of 1,000 liter totes.

13. The method of claim 12 wherein a pipeline is utilized for the transfer of liquid coating base from said large containers to a tank from which said liquid coating base is dispensed.

14. The method of claim 11 further including the step of identifying the type of liquid coating base added upon the container.

15. The method of claim 11 wherein the operation of said production line includes the addition of colorant to the blended liquid coating base.

16. The method of claim 15 further including the step of identifying the name of the color resulting from the colorant added upon the container.

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17. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of placing an order by a consumer directly with a supplier of liquid coating product is conducted with use of telecommunications.

18. The method of claim 17 wherein the step of placing an order by a consumer directly with a supplier of liquid coating product is conducted with use of a telephone connected to a public telephone exchange.

19. The method of claim 17 wherein the step of entering said customer order into a customer order subsystem is accomplished by supplier personnel.

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20. The method of claim 17 wherein the step of placing an order by a consumer directly with a supplier of liquid coating product is conducted with use of facsimile transmission through a telephone exchange.

21. The method of claim 17 wherein the customer order subsystem and the production subsystem are both maintained on the same computer.

22. The method of claim 17 wherein the customer order subsystem is maintained one computer and the production subsystem is maintained on a different computer.

23. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of placing an order by a consumer directly with a remote supplier of liquid coating product is conducted with use of the internet.

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24. The method of claim 23 wherein an internet device is utilized to place an order directly with a remote supplier of liquid coating product.

25. The method of claim 24 wherein the step of placing an order by a consumer directly with a supplier of liquid coating product is conducted with use of a dedicated terminal with internet access only to a web site maintained by the supplier.

26. The method of claim 25 wherein the step of entering said customer order into a customer order subsystem is accomplished by the computer maintaining the customer order subsystem.

27. The method of claim 23 wherein the customer order subsystem and the production subsystem are both maintained on the same computer.

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28. The method of claim 23 wherein the customer order subsystem is maintained one computer and the production subsystem is maintained on a different computer.

29. The method of claim 23 wherein said web site provides product information assisting in the selection of liquid coating product inclusive of the identification of a plurality of particular, custom colors.

30. The method of claim 29 wherein said product information assisting in the selection of liquid coating product includes liquid base characteristics.

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31. The method of claim 23 wherein said web site provides assistance in the selection liquid coating product appropriate to a given job as defined by information input by the consumer.

32. The method of claim 31 wherein said assistance in the selection of liquid coating product includes the recommendation of liquid coating base.

33. The method of claim 31 wherein said assistance in the selection of liquid coating product includes the calculation of appropriate volume for a given application as defined by consumer input.

34. The method of claim 31 wherein said assistance in the selection of liquid coating product includes the suggestion of at least one particular, custom, color based upon digital input by said consumer, said digital input including but not limited to digital video input, digital photograph input and digital solid modeling input.

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APPLICANT'S RESPONSE TO FIRST OFFICE ACTION

As per claims 29-34, DISTRIBUTOR ROLES discloses the use of the Internet and electronic commerce, including Electronic Data Interface (EDI), to allow customers to order home improvement products (page 1, paragraph 1; page 4, paragraph 9). DISTRIBUTOR ROLES does not describe include (sic) plurality of standard and non-standard colors (claim 29), specific characteristics (claim 30) of liquid coating products according to job specifications (claim 31), recommendation of liquid coating base (claim 32), volume calculation per user input (claim 33), or that customer input may include digital video, photograph or digital solid modeling (claim 34).

Nevertheless, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to include (a) plurality of standard and non-standard colors (claim 29), specific characteristics (claim 30) of liquid coating products according to job specifications (claim 31), recommendation of liquid coating base (claim 32), volume calculation per user input (claim 33), or that customer input may include digital video, photograph or digital solid modeling (claim 34).

One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to include ... (claim 29) ... (claim 30) ... (claim 31) ... (claim 32) ... (claim 33) ... (claim 34) for the obvious reason that these are normal considerations when selecting liquid coating product bases and colors ... (and) it would have been obvious to include similar technology in the design of web sites for ... other uses. (FOA page 22, last paragraph through page 24 first paragraph)

Conclusion

Applicant respectfully and gratefully acknowledges Examiner's direction of enquiry to his office and provision of telephone numbers for: the same, his supervisor, group fax and reception.

B. Submission of Evidence Meeting Objections & Overcoming Rejections

Objections to the Specification

1. Applicant respectfully submits that Amendment A, attached hereto, meets the objection to the specification in correction of the informalities identified and objected to by Examiner in the first Office action by effecting the corrections graciously supplied by Examiner in said action for the purposes